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CONSIDERATION OF WAYS AND MEANS OF COMMEMORATING IN 1999 THE TWENTIETH ANNIVERSARY OF THE VIENNA CONFERENCE ON SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY FOR DEVELOPMENT AND THE VISION OF THE UNITED NATIONS ROLE IN THE AREA OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY FOR DEVELOPMENT

DRAFT REPORT

Rapporteur Ms. Marina RANGA (Romania)

Chapter ...

Chairman's summary of the discussion

1. In addition to the note by the secretariat on this agenda item (E/CN.16/1997/7), the documentation included a report of the Commission's panel of experts outlining specific areas which could be dealt with by small expert group meetings as a basis for developing a "common vision" (E/CN.16/1997/CRP.2), as well as another document containing a summary of the discussions held at a workshop in Jamaica (E/CN.16/1997/Misc.1).

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2. The Commission expressed its appreciation for the secretariat note, and suggestions were made concerning additional elements to be taken into account for the elaboration of a common vision. These included consideration of the evolution from a state-led to a science-led system, and the involvement of civil society and stakeholders including Governments, enterprises, academia and NGOs, as well as individual citizens, in the process of formulating a common vision for the future contribution of science and technology to development. Science and technology were to be seen as incorporating not only natural and physical sciences, but social sciences as well. The process for elaborating a common vision, as outlined in document E/CN.16/1997/CRP.2, should be anchored in effective international cooperation, with a recognized role and responsibility for the United Nations system, it should bridge conceptual and practical issues, and it should combine both global and regional dimensions. It should also cover such concerns as the development of South-South cooperation, the integration of LDCs and economies in transition into the world economy, the transfer of technological capabilities to developing countries, and the preservation and development of the scientific and technological potential of countries in transition. This process should be linked to the follow-up work to the Rio Conference and Agenda 21.

3. With regard to further modalities for the elaboration of the vision, in particular in the context of the twentieth anniversary of the Vienna Conference, diverse proposals were presented. These included the discussion of a common vision at a global level, with different variations such as the holding of a special session of the General Assembly or the preparation of a special high-level meeting at the fourth session of the Commission on Science and Technology for Development. The holding of regional events such as science and technology exhibitions was also suggested, along with the preparation of a video film on science and technology in relation to development, highlighting both positive and negative aspects. In the course of this discussion, the representative of UNESCO officially invited the Commission and the secretariat to participate in the preparations for the World Science Conference, to be held in 1999.